



## From the Inkwell

*This Latter Rain comes at a time when Christian values and ethics continue to be strongly questioned by the world at large, whilst at the same time individual beliefs and interpretations are creating polarisation within Christian groups themselves. In many places what has been traditionally a conservative and peaceful setting has been turned into an environment where Satan is successfully 'sowing discord' among the brethren. But maybe it has always been so.*

*The article on Enoch refers to the difference between 'walking with God' and 'walking before God'. The attributes of a Christian life will truly be manifest in those who walk with God.*

*Peter's experiences are always an example for us to learn by, and Amos shows that you don't need a Theology Degree to be religious. "What Are We Made Of" gives a further explanation of each of the components of our being - spirit and soul and body. This article also points out the great gift of eternal physical life that God has promised to those that 'walk with' Him.*

*May God open our minds as our eyes read the words of these articles and may we hear the still small voice leading us into His peace so that others may see something special in our lives witnessing for Him.*

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*"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called **Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace**"*

Isaiah 9:6

# Is Your Religion A Labour of Love?

Is your religion a labour of love? A joy to your soul? Something you take great pleasure in?

How do you think God wants it to be?

Hosea said God wants to be a husband to us. Yes, He wants us to be an equal with Him in a partnership: like a marriage is the best way to describe it. This is almost too close a relationship to imagine.

So what do we do to qualify for this condition? *“If ye love me keep my commandments”* were Jesus’ words. We want to be a person willing to follow whatever God asks us to do. In other words our actions are to please God in everything that we do in our way of life, through love, pure, simple love. Perhaps we feel some of the instructions we are given might seem trivial, but if viewed with a loving attitude we can see we are being moulded for greater things. We have the opportunity to obey a loving God, who is allowing us to be tested and tried, so that we can become stronger and more reliable in our faith, and in return we are proving His word true, fulfilling His promises.

Remember Satan has been given the job to make the instructions we have been given seem trivial and unimportant, so we will neglect them. The way for us to gain the upper hand is to seek for spiritual help, that unknown untapped power to help us think and act in ways acceptable by God. The strength and power of the invisible spiritual power is our secret weapon against sin and evil.

Let me illustrate this from an incident

recorded in 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings chapter 6. Elisha, the prophet of God, sent messages to the King of Israel to tell him when and how his enemy was going to attack him. The King of the enemy reckoned he had a spy in his cabinet, but his soldier told him it was Elisha the prophet who was doing the damage. So this proud king sent to capture Elisha.

When Elisha and his servant came out of the city in the morning, the city was surrounded with soldiers and chariots ready to capture him. His servant was afraid and said, *“Alas my master! What shall we do?”* and Elisha answered, *“Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them”*. And Elisha prayed and said, *Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw; and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire around about Elisha”* 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 6:15-17. Elisha had spiritual help. We, you and I, can be surrounded by angels and ministering spirits if our faith and thoughts are strong. Now this is not the end of the story.

Elisha prayed, *“Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness”* 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 6:18. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. This was blindness that they did not know or recognise places or people. And Elisha said unto them, *“This is not the way neither is this the city: follow me and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. And it came to pass when they were come into Samaria that Elisha said Lord open the eyes of these men that they*

*may see. And the Lord opened their eyes and they saw; and behold they were in the midst of Samaria” 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 6:20.* The king of Israel wanted to smite them, but Elisha instructed him to set food and water before them and send them to their master.


A few points here are worth thinking about.

There are ministering spirits ready to help us if we ask for spiritual help. God may give instructions but He is always there to help if we ask Him. God that is with us can work miracles and help us in

ways we haven't thought about. We have to be prepared with the right attitude and have our eyes open if we are going to receive spiritual help.

God said He would confound the wise and give understanding to the simple. His ways are not man's ways. We don't have to be a Rocket Scientist to understand God, but rather we need to be humble, trusting, loving and sincere, willing to follow a loving God. We may find we have to leave some earthly habits which others find enjoyable: pride, selfishness, etc., and give

preference in our actions to the ways God has shown in the Old and New Testaments, humility, turning the other cheek, sharing, etc., with our religion based on love and acceptance. This, with God's help, will prepare us for Immortality.

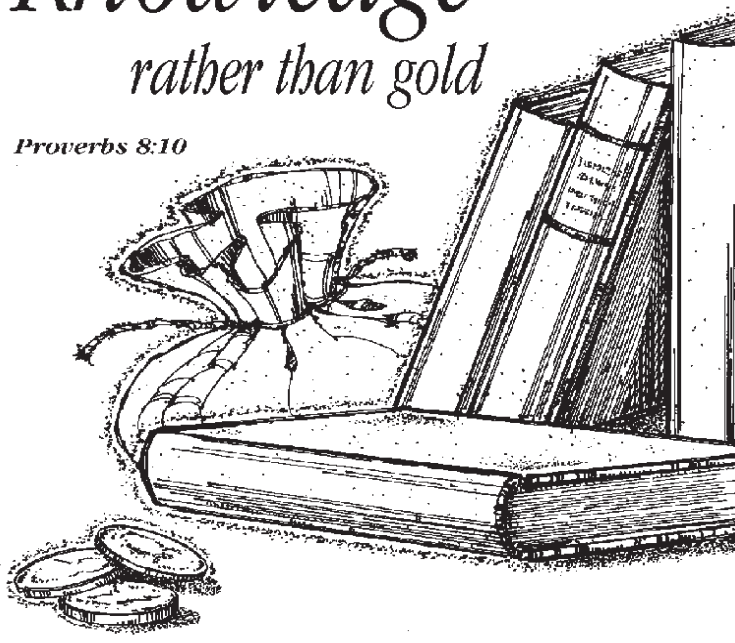
If we seek through love to live the life God wants us to live He will help us achieve it. We need to pray, to stop and listen to God, and then, through our prayer, ask Him to increase our faith, He will send spiritual help to guide our thoughts and actions. This is His promise to us. 

*Choose...*

*Instruction*  
*instead of silver,*

*Knowledge*  
*rather than gold*

*Proverbs 8:10*



The illustration shows a stack of three books on the right. To the left of the books is a funnel with a ribbon tied around its neck. In the foreground, there are several coins scattered on the surface. The entire scene is rendered in a detailed, stippled black and white style.

# What Are Little Boys Made Of?

In Paul's letter to the Thessalonians, as he is concluding his 1<sup>st</sup> Epistle, he uses these words, "*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (5:23). This was Paul's prayer for these faithful believers, that their whole being, their complete earthly temple, would be preserved, similar to Enoch and Elijah. It was not enough for Paul to pray for this request, but he supports his request by stating that God has promised it, and God will fulfil it. Paul used these words, "*Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it*" (v24).

We all know the old saying, there are only two certainties in this life, taxes and death! Here Paul is saying this is not necessarily true as it is not necessary to see physical death, because he requests that their whole being, including their physical body, to be preserved 'blameless', until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was not a one off quotation by Paul, for in Romans 12:1-2 he made a similar statement: "*I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove*

*what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*". Paul made many other similar statements – see also 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-56.

Let us consider definitions for our Spirit, our Soul and our Body.

The **spirit** is the life motivating force of our being. When it is withdrawn from the soul and body they are dormant or 'asleep' to the knowledge and surroundings to his earthly life, as we know it – commonly we say they have died. Isaiah recorded in Isaiah 57:1-2, "*They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness*". It appears then they have some consciousness, but it does not pertain to the things of this world (Psalm 6:5; Ecclesiastes 9:5).

The **spirit**, as the name implies, would be of a spiritually tangible form, as opposed to a physical material form, and as we are constrained in this world we are unable to see this type of existence. Elijah must have had this vision though, because he could see spiritual beings around him and he prayed that his servant might have it so that the servant could also see the spiritual support that was around Elijah (2<sup>nd</sup> Kings 6:15-17). The spirit, then, is of a form which we at present are unable to see with the natural eye. It is the motivating force that keeps the body alive. We each individually have our own individual spirit,

## Spirit, Soul

# What Are Little Girls Made Of?

which was created by God when he created the world (Numbers 16:22; Hebrews 12:9). The spirit of mankind is different from the spirit of animals, even though the function of each is the same, to bring life to the body.

The **soul** is the essence of our being, our instincts, our reasoning, our personality traits and the core of 'our being'. An animal has instinct, an animal can be trained, but an animal does not have reasoning with the same consequences to the extent that people have. For example, we used to have a cow who knew that water came out of the tap and she would push and twist that tap with her nose until water came out. Then she left it, and sometimes hours later we would find the tap gushing out water with no one around! The cow didn't have the logic to know that she should turn it off. She didn't have the reasoning to realise that the source could run dry, and the ground would get too wet, etc. As humans we have a soul, which was created to give us the ability through training, education, prayer, reading, etc., to be able to think and work things out, and to be developed in all these avenues. The soul is also the seat of our feelings and emotions.

The **body** is our physical frame, the 'house' in which we live. It is developed in our mother and inherits traits both good and bad, from both father and mother, even to ailments such as asthma, or physical

weaknesses such as a bad back, etc. We understand that the physical body as we know it is far short of what God originally created, the fall having come about in the Garden of Eden, when mankind was cast out of Heaven (Genesis 3:9-21).

This physical body is motivated by blood, but God has said there is to be a physical body motivated by the spirit living within the body, replacing the blood, and that in this condition mankind will not be plagued with the sickness, disease and physical or intellectual limitations that we have at present. It is hard for us to imagine such a condition, but our limitations of knowledge are like a drop of sand compared to a mountain in difference of capacity. We know nothing of what we could and will know, but we have this knowledge – that God can and will reveal it to us if we seek through prayer, meditation and reading.

The Bible records in Genesis 3:19, *"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"*. It seems hard to imagine, but here again we cannot limit that knowledge and ability of God and if He said this is what He did, this is how it was. We, though, having been given one of these physical bodies, now have the ability to prepare

# and Body

it to be changed for the return of Jesus, or to allow it to accept the curse of death put on it in the Garden of Eden.

Now let us think more upon the redemption of the spirit, soul and body and I would like here to present an article written by the late Ralph Gray in the year 1948. Ralph headed the article, "***The Life of Spirit, Soul and Body***" (***Full Redemption***), and marked for us to read Philippians 1:15-25 and Matthew 19:16-29 first. Read these verses then read on.

In Ezekiel chapter 18 we read: "*But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?*" (v21-23).

Psalms 79:11 says, "*Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die*", which shows that if we desire it, we can get away from this appointment with death, if we "*Do that which is lawful and right, we shall live*".

Now the body is the only part of a person that is liable to be destroyed by death as we will now prove: "*As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down into the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither will his place know him any more*" Job 7:9-10. "*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it*" Ecclesiastes 12:7. "*But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me*" Psalm 49:15. "*Thou*

*shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell*" Proverbs 23:14. "*He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness*" Isaiah 57:2.

It is evident that if we do, and obey, all the laws and commandments which have been given to preserve the body, then we can look ahead to that passage in 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:23 being fulfilled in us, "*And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*".

We will take that passage of the Scripture found in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-52, "*Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*"

It is considered by nearly everybody that we must all sleep or die, as the word 'sleep' is used here it is intended to mean death (John 11:11-14), and they would refer to Genesis 3:19, "*...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*". Also in Hebrews 9:27, "*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*". (Note here that it does not say 'it is appointed unto **all** men' but only unto men in general – in other words the majority of men will see death).

The first passage has reference to Adam in consequence of him having broken God's commandment and applies also to everybody born to this earth but we are told in Proverbs 7:2, "*Keep my commandments, and live; and my law as the apple of thine eye*". Revelations 22:14, "*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through*

*the gates into the city”.*


When one came unto Jesus and asked Him, “*Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him...but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*” Matthew 19:16-17. Which shows that if our bodies are not to return to dust as did Adam’s, we must keep God’s commands.

What is your personal attitude after reading the encouragement from God to “*Keep his commandments and live*”? We know that death is referred to as inevitable, but God who causes the orbit of the planets, sun, moon and stars, this same God has said to mankind, you can break this appointment with death.

We need to study to understand sin and evil, spiritual strength and help, wisdom and knowledge, righteousness and obedience, forgiveness and redemption, etc., so we can comprehend how God has

planned for conscientious individuals to break this appointment, at the return of Jesus to this Earth.

Do we want to be on God’s team to have spirit, soul and body renewed ready for the change (Romans 11:1,2; 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51)? The promise has been made; it is written in indelible ink to be fulfilled; it won’t come by chance though, so we need to accept that it is possible, decide it can happen to me, then seek God to reveal His commands He wants us to keep. Encouragement and spiritual help are there for us to help us in our understanding, and to guide us to discern what God wants us personally to do. This will happen in God’s and not man’s ways and time.

*“For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye”* Ezekiel 18:32. 

## The Little Things

When God had made the sun and stars  
He made the little things,  
He painted all the autumn leaves,  
The butterfly’s gay wings;  
He fashioned every snow-flake, too,  
The thrush’s eggs of speckled blue;  
And hosts of wild flowers beautiful,  
Of every shape and hue.

God shaped the fairy acorn cup,  
The dainty, frail sea-shell,  
The dew-drops pearls upon the grass,  
Such things His glory tell;  
Shall we not too, spend thought and care  
On everything we do,  
To do it perfectly for Him  
Who loves both me and you?

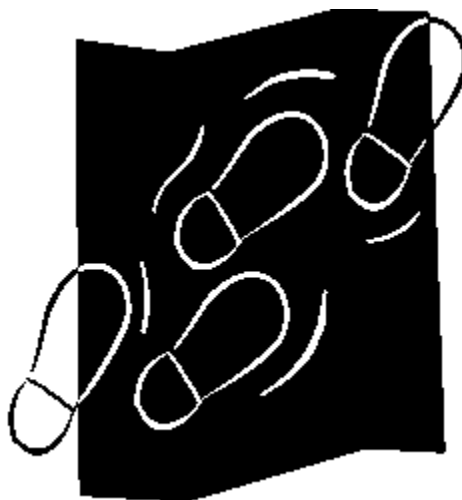
# “And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him.”

**Who was Enoch?** Enoch was the seventh generation from Adam. You often notice that God has a special relationship with the number 7 and it is usually accompanied by something extra special as in this case. We know from our Bibles that Enoch lived for 365 years (one year for each day of the year which makes it easy to remember). And we also know that Enoch’s son was Methuselah – Methuselah lived for 969 solar years which is 999 lunar years – his longevity being a sign of his father’s righteousness. We also know that Enoch walked with God after he had Methuselah for 300 years. Remember the old saying, *The oldest man who ever lived died before his father did.* The name Methuselah actually means “when he is dead it shall be sent”. With the close communion Enoch shared with God Enoch would have known what this meant – that when his son died the flood (or it) would be sent. Imagine living with that knowledge the whole of your life? But the other amazing thing is that amongst all those who were alive at that time, who would all have known the meaning of Methuselah’s name, the Bible records only Enoch as having chosen to follow God’s ways and walk with God.

Enoch is an example to all of us of a life devoid of sin, of a man whose inward and outward eyes were focussed God-ward. John Wroe (the founder of the Christian Israelite Church) talked a lot about the inward and outward eye (or monitor). “A Nazarite is one that never mars his temple; an inward Nazarite is one who has the Law of God in his inward part, the inward eye;

the spirit of the mind is one eye, and the Spirit of God is the other eye; it is always before the eye; these are Israel”.

**So what does the phrase ‘to walk with’ mean.** Well the Hebrew word for “walked” is *halak* meaning ‘to go on habitually or up and down’. It was part of Enoch’s everyday life – every second of his life he walked with God – not just on Friday night and Sunday morning for 1 hour – but every second. *Halak* is also a walk without a particular destination – in other words Enoch did not walk with God to gain a specific reward – he walked with God because he loved God and God was his intimate and constant companion his whole life. Enoch had faith that his walk with God, being the right thing, God would look after him. There are only two men of whom the Bible tells us they walked with God. There is Enoch, of course, and the second one was Noah in Genesis 6:9 where it tells us that “*Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah*





walked with God". But unfortunately after the flood, Noah became negligent in passing God's laws and commandments on to his children and thus missed the reward that Enoch had.

We often read in the Bible of believers 'walking before God' and 'worshipping before God' in the Temple, so what is the difference between 'walking before' and 'walking with'. To 'walk before God' strongly suggests obedience and subordination (1 Kings 2:4; 3:6, etc.) rather than 'walking with God' which suggests worship and communion. The level of intimacy is far deeper with the 'walk with' than the 'walk before'. It is this depth of communion that should be the 'soul' aim of all Christians.

Just think about the depth of communion you share with your friends when you walk with them – the conversation and intimacy are at a completely different level than with people who are only acquaintances. The depth of the relationship is deeper and more abiding because it is constant rather than sporadic. This is what it is like to walk with God as your friend, mentor and Father – a depth of communion that cannot be achieved just by outward show or Church attendance. And as with any close friend, you are friends because you share things in common and reflect each others standards and attributes. For instance, we are told often in the Bible that God is love, so to walk with God you must reflect this same attitude of love.

To walk with God you must manifest the fruit of the Spirit for these show the active work of the Spirit within your heart and mind. With the Spirit's presence in your heart, the heart must naturally go through renewal, regeneration and rejuvenation. How can you walk with God

without manifesting God's nature itself by displaying the fruit of the Spirit?

What is the fruit of the Spirit? The fruits of the Spirit are mentioned in Galatians 5:22,23 as:

Love

Joy

Peace

Longsuffering

Gentleness

Goodness

Faith

Meekness

Temperance

- against such there is no law.

The believer being the tree, the Spirits of Christ and The Holy Ghost (Jerusalem Above) rest within the heart of the tree and the tree bears fruit because of the presence of the Two Spirits. These are some of the attributes Enoch must have manifested to 'walk with God'.

For Enoch to have been the only man of that time that 'walked with God' gives us an indication of how far away mankind had drifted from relationship with God. Obviously the world had become more and more decadent and this one figure chose to 'live in the world but not be of the world' and instead he lived in communion with God keeping God's laws and ordinances and reflecting God's nature and administering God's Will. When we look at the example of Enoch there is little mentioned in the Bible as to how he walked with God. For this we look at the Book of Jasher (which is referenced in Joshua and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel) as a reference book:

*"And Enoch lived 65 years and he begat Methuselah; and Enoch walked with God after having begot Methuselah, and he served the Lord, and despised the evil ways of men. And the soul of Enoch was wrapped up in the instruction of the Lord,*

*in knowledge and in understanding; and he wisely retired from the sons of men, and secreted himself from them for many days*". In other words Enoch despised the lifestyle and ways of his contemporaries. He walked according to God's law gaining wisdom and understanding and separated himself from the world so as not to be polluted. According to Jasher, Enoch was responsible for teaching the 'sons of men' about God's laws and commandments before he was translated. He is also attributed with making peace among the 'sons of men' after teaching them the wisdom of God's law. Remember also, that at this stage in history, Adam died. Adam died whilst Enoch was teaching the sons of men – so Enoch would have known all his forefathers back to Adam – that would be like us knowing our great, great, great, great grandfather and all the generations between him and us and the only one of them accounted as righteous was Enoch and after the death of Enoch again only one, Noah.

There are two attributes necessary to commence the 'walk with God'.

The first one is **faith**. "What is faith? It is the confident assurance that what we hope for is going to happen. It is the evidence of things we cannot yet see" (NLB Translation of Hebrews 11:1). Without faith there would be no belief in God and thus Christianity would not exist without faith. By faith Christians believe that God exists and that Jesus Christ is the Saviour and Redeemer of all men.

The second attribute is **humility**. What is humility? Humility is that by which a man has a modest estimate of his own worth, and submits himself to others or more importantly for the Christian it is a quality by which a person considering his own defects has a lowly opinion of himself and willingly submits himself to God and to others for God's sake.

The Bible gives us many warnings about the danger of pride – the lack of humility: 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:1-5 says, "*The elders which are among you...feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time*". God cannot do anything with a proud and haughty spirit - Proverbs 15:25, "*The Lord will destroy the house of the proud: but he will establish the border of the widow*". The widow being one of the most vulnerable elements of society at that time – she would also be figurative of the most humble of beings. And an even harsher sentiment is rendered in Proverbs 16:5,6, "*Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished*" but God doesn't leave it there He gives us the answer in the next verse where it states, "*By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.*" "*Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off*" Psalm 138:6. Mercy is related to compassion, if you show mercy to someone you are being compassionate towards them. Remember we are told that mercy and peace come together.

It is impossible to walk with God if your heart is proud. The biggest danger is not only your separation from private and

intimate communion with God, but Malachi the prophet tells us in verse 1 of chapter 4 “*For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch*”. To have neither root nor branch means to have no history and no future – for the Family of Israel this has an even deeper impact – a proud spirit will destroy the good works of your ancestors and fail to lay a good foundation, if any at all, for your descendants – they will be treated as stubble and burned.

The most malleable heart is that of the humble and the contrite: “*Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven*” Mt 18:4. “*For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted*” Mt 23:12. And humbling was a key part of the remedy for Israel to gain God’s forgiveness in 2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 7:14, “*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land*”. And there are of course many, many more quotations where the key to a right relationship with God is with a humble heart.

Every night Christian Israelites pray, in one way or another, that Christ and Jerusalem Above will keep God’s laws in them. No one can say **they** are obeying the law, for it is only because they ask in prayer for **the Two Immortal Helpmates to do this work** in them, that it will be done. This is where the humility starts. Every good act, thought and deed you do is only done **because you have asked** these Two Spirits to do this work in you. If we

relied on ourselves, no good work would be possible. So, no patting yourself on the back for achievements and conquests, rather give the thanks to Christ and Jerusalem Above for doing it through you – you really had nothing to do with it – except the asking! And prayerfully ask them to work within you changing you into God’s image rather than man’s.

This is the first step in humility – understanding that you are not the one responsible but rather the Helpmates whose help and presence you asked for in prayer will do the work in you. Giving God a humble and a contrite heart to work with makes His work easier. “*A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps*” Proverbs 16:9.

Have you noticed – faith and humility are two conditions of the heart. It is the state of the heart that is the important thing – not your outward works but the true motive for those works. God alone knows the motive behind your actions. Keep the law in love and you will gain peace and understanding, keep the law by the letter and stick to the legalistic code and unfortunately peace will evade you. The law is not kept by the letter but rather by love within the heart. Just as in our earthly house we love and respect our fathers and whilst living in their house abide by their rules, so too in the universal house of God. I keep God’s laws and believe in them because I love God as my Father and want to live in His house with Him under His conditions just as I would my earthly father’s house. “*This is the covenant that I make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them*” Hebrews 10:16.

Readers, prayerfully examine the state of your heart and ask the Helpmates,

Christ and Jerusalem Above to work within you, transforming your spirit, soul and body to be what God originally designed you to be, reflections (images) of Him. As stated before, with humility and compassion comes peace, and peace is what close communion with our Creator gives us. Look and examine the life and example of Enoch and actively demonstrate your faith in your life for all to see. Let your prayer be, “Make me humble Lord” for God can work with a humble heart, He cannot work

with a proud, vain heart.

In finishing let us think about a portion of the prayer of Micah: “*He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God*” Micah 6:8. Enoch was a model of graciousness and servanthood, adopt that as your banner and great will be the depth of communion with your Creator.📖

## Hymn 129

Ps 144; Ephesians 6:12; Romans 13:10

Equip me for the war,  
And teach my hands to fight;  
My simple, upright heart prepare,  
And guide my words aright.  
Control my every thought;  
My whole of sin remove;  
Let all my works in Thee be wrought,  
Let all be wrought in love.

O arm me with the mind,  
Meek Lamb! which was in Thee;  
And let my knowing zeal be join'd  
With perfect clarity:  
With calm and temper'd zeal  
Let me enforce Thy call;  
And vindicate Thy gracious will,  
Which offers life to all.

O may I love like Thee!  
In all Thy footsteps tread!  
Thou hatest all iniquity,  
But nothing Thou hast made.  
O may I learn the art,  
With meekness to reprove;  
To hate the sin with all my heart,  
But still the sinner love.

# Statement of Belief

**The Christian Israelite Church beliefs can be fully supported by the Scriptures. Here is an outline:**

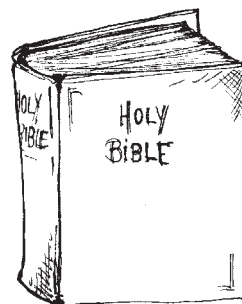
## **We Believe**

- \* In God Almighty creator of all things (Genesis 1:1).
- \* In the existence of Satan, the Devil, in whom God allowed iniquity to be placed (James 2:19; Ezekiel 28:14,15).
- \* That God created a spirit-existence in which the devil manifested evil and caused some of the spirits to rebel against God (Isaiah 14:12-14; Jude 6).
- \* That God created our physical world, to which each person comes with a body and a soul made alive by a spirit from the spiritual creation (Luke 9:55; Genesis 2:7).
- \* That God gave His people instructions on the way they should live, which instructions were *"for their good always"* (Deuteronomy 6:24).
- \* That all have sinned and come *"short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:19).
- \* That God has reconciled the (whole) world to Himself through the sacrifice of Jesus (John 3:16,17).
- \* That through belief in the sacrifice of Jesus believers are counted as righteous before God, and can be assured of the resurrection of their souls (a Spiritual body) at Jesus' return (1 Timothy 4:10; 1 Corinthians 15:44).
- \* That there will be a small number who will fully prove their faith by a work of true obedience to God's instructions and will thereby receive the prize of the highest calling of God, the redemption of spirit and soul and body - this living mortal Body made Immortal without seeing death (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Revelation 14:1-5; Hebrews 11:39,40).
- \* That Jesus Christ will return to this earth again, subdue the power of Satan and reign forever and ever (Revelation chapters 19 and 20).
- \* That the return of Jesus Christ is near and we are living in the period described in Scripture as the latter days (Matthew chapter 24; Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21).
- \* That there are promises in the Scriptures especially to Israel - God's chosen people (1 Peter 2:9).
- \* That although Israel of old did not accept the challenge of spiritually being God's peculiar people, a remnant of their descendants will come forward in the latter days to fulfill the obligations and receive the promises (Revelation 7:1-8).
- \* That the Mission of the Christian Israelite Church is to awaken the lost ten tribes of Israel to this special inheritance to be the physical Immortal "Bride of the Lamb" and to be the vehicle for the task of bringing them all together at God's appointed time (Matthew 10:5,6; Revelation chapter 19).

**We believe that God is the absolute Judge and Arbiter and that we as His servants have an obligation to respond to what He puts in each heart, and that whilst we seek to proclaim and discuss our beliefs, we have no right to contend with other people about them.**

# Debug Your Bible:

## Don't Bring Him Down!



It seems to be a trend these days to humanise Jesus Christ – to give Him girlfriends or a wife and family - to make Him more like we are. Others say that He was hidden away after the crucifixion and lived on to have a long life. The very facts given in our Bible shows us that what is recorded must have happened purely and simply because of His own family and the disciples' reactions to His resurrection. Let me explain.

Doubt was a frequent companion on Jesus' mission journey. Starting with his cousin John the Baptist who had seen the Holy Ghost descend upon Jesus as a dove, once imprisoned, voiced his doubts and started questioning whether Jesus was who He said He was.

His brothers and sisters showed they were embarrassed by Him, and the townsfolk tried to get rid of Him. When Jesus returned to Nazareth with His Disciples and He went to the local synagogue to teach on the Sabbath Day the reaction of the locals was typical, *"Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him"*. Jesus knew of their doubt and showed His understanding of it when He said to them, *"A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house"* Mark 6:3,4. He knew His family and local community where He had grown up would not accept that He was the Messiah. The aftermath of this meeting in

the synagogue was that *"all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong"* Luke 4:29,30 – the locals, who had known Jesus all His life, wanted to kill Him, they wanted to throw His body from the highest cliff and kill Him – which was the sentence for a false prophet. What did Jesus do? Did he yell at them, tell them they were being stupid, try to fight them off? No. In Jesus' peaceful way, *"he passing through the midst of them went his way"* Luke 4:30. He knew that petty bickering wasn't going to lead these people to a knowledge of who He was and what His mission was – what was the point in arguing?

Jesus even had the opposition of His friends. After the selection of the 12 the group journeyed to a house where a multitude again gathered making it that the group could not even have a meal. *"And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself"* Mark 3:21, in other words He is mentally unbalanced and must be restrained.

Of all the people in His life, though, Mary, His mother, would have always believed in Him and in His mission – you would hope that during these trying times when nobody believed Him, the security of His mother's faith in who He was and His mission would have been a steady rock of support for Him.

Now take a look at the inner sanctum, His 12 closest companions, and their faith and loyalty was tested many times.

Peter, James and John were of the very inner sanctum. Jesus chose this trio at various times to commune with Him privately. On His final night at the Last Supper with His disciples, Peter testified to Him of his loyalty in the face of any danger. Jesus told him that this faith would be tested shortly. In the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus went to pray, He left 8 of the disciples at a the gateway to

the garden but again took the trio further along with Him and asked Peter, James and John to watch with Him. On Jesus' return, they had fallen asleep – 3 times Jesus asked this trio to watch with Him and 3 times the trio fell asleep, leaving Jesus alone and isolated in His hour of need. Jesus prayed at this time, "*Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt*" Mark 14:36. In His time of greatest trial and physical anguish, Jesus had been abandoned even by the faithful 'three'. He doesn't rebuke them; He is quietly resigned now to His fate, as well as the lack of faith of His disciples.

Finally, after the arrest of Jesus, Peter is noticed as being a follower of Jesus and, as Jesus had told Him, before the 'cockcrows' twice, you will deny me thrice.

So we know where Peter was but where were the rest of the disciples – John was also with him but the rest were in hiding. There was nobody who defended Jesus, stood up for Him in front of His accusers. Not one of the disciples at this stage believed anything that Jesus had been trying to teach them.

After the crucifixion the disciples are still lying low. Mary and Mary, the mother of James go to the Garden to anoint the body of Jesus with special burial herbs. We all know the story, the stone is rolled away and Jesus is not there. We are told in Mark that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene when He told her to go and tell the disciples – but they would not believe her. He "*appeared in another form*" to the 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13) and they went and told the other disciples – but the other disciples would still not believe them. Finally, in the third appearance, He appeared to them as they ate and upbraided them with their unbelief and

### **Cock-crow**

William Barclay in his book of the Gospel of Matthew has a valuable insight into this section of that terrible night:

"It may well be that the cock-crow was not the voice of a bird; and that from the beginning it was not meant to mean that. After all, the house of the high priest was right in the centre of Jerusalem. And there was not likely to be poultry in the centre of the city. There was, in fact, a regulation in the Jewish law that it was illegal to keep cocks and hens in the Holy City because they defiled holy things. But the hour of 3am was called *cockcrow*, and for this reason. At that hour the Roman guard was changed in the Castle of Antonia; and the sign of the changing of the guard was a trumpet call. The Latin for that trumpet call was *gallicinium*, which means *cockcrow*. It is at least possible that just as Peter made his third denial the trumpet from the castle battlements rang out over the sleeping city "...and Peter remembered; and thereupon he went and wept his heart out."

hardness of heart for having doubted Mary and the other disciples with their report. After the Lord spoke to them He was received into heaven to sit on the right side of God (Mark 16:19) having fulfilled everything He had always told them He would.

With this background of lack of support and lack of people believing in Him it makes no sense that Jesus would have pulled off the biggest hoax in history by living and marrying, having a family and living a long life. Why would these men go from the examples of doubt and unbelief shown above, to giving their lives for a risen Jesus Christ – and that was their message – not Jesus Christ living and having a family – but Jesus Christ raised from the dead after dying for the sins of all of us. They died for something they firmly believed in. Just look at what happened to these men who had been insipid and laid back before the resurrection but burned with zeal and fire after the resurrection:

**Peter** - Martyred, head downward, in the circus of Nero – believed to have died cAD64.

**James** – cousin of Jesus and brother of John, the first of the 12 to be martyred under King Herod Agrippa in AD44

**James** – cousin of Jesus, also known as James the Lesser, was said to be martyred at Jerusalem.

**John** – cousin of Jesus and brother to James, believed to have died of old age – the only one.

**Jude** also known as Thaddeus – cousin of Jesus and brother to **James** – martyred in Persia – date unknown.

**Andrew** – brother of Peter, crucified in Patras in Achaia.

**Simon Zelotes** – crucified in Yorkshire for spreading Christianity.

**Matthew** also known as Levi – believed to have been martyred.

**Thomas** also known as Didymus suffered martyrdom whilst preaching in South India.

How many people do you know that would die for a **lie**.

Something momentous happened after the crucifixion for at least 2 of Jesus' brothers and 11 men to have a complete about face. They went from disbelieving apathy to religious fervour. They spread the message of the resurrected Jesus Christ around the known world at the time and laid the foundation for Christianity today. If Jesus had just lived on and raised a family these disciples would not have preached a lie – people don't die for lies – eventually the truth emerges, but in this case 10 of the original disciples met with martyrs' deaths, John being the only one who it is believed died of old age (or some believe may have been translated) and Judas took his own life..

Something major, or more appropriately, something miraculous happened for these men to give their lives willing for the message of Jesus Christ **raised** – the only thing that can have happened is that which is recorded in the Gospels – Jesus was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, was raised from the dead, dwelt with man for 40 days after this and then was raised to heaven to dwell at the right side of God. This is what happened. Nothing else accounts for the change in attitude of his friends, family and associates. We have to stop trying to bring Jesus Christ down to our level and accept Him for who He truly is; take Jesus Christ on board in our lives, and let Him be the navigator of our life's journey. Let us raise ourselves to His level, rather than try to drag Him down to ours – which cannot happen.📖



# Peace on Earth, Goodwill to Men

As I write this article I reflect on the fact that it is only a number of weeks until Christmas.

One thought prompts another, and so I see in my mind's eye the previous happy celebrations of Christmas, and the glorious truths that we hear of the time then remembered - the time of the birth of Our Saviour, THE LORD, Jesus Christ; the babe in Bethlehem's manger; the angels' greeting to the shepherds and the praise and adoration of the heavenly host, saying "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men*".

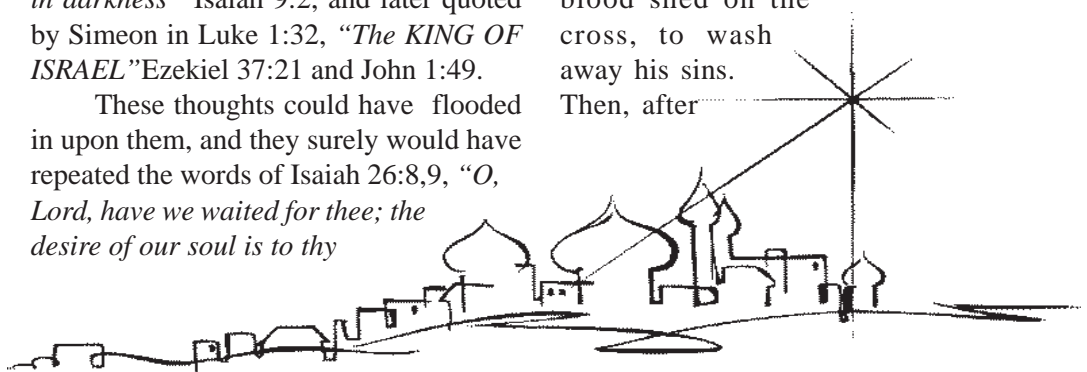
As the shepherds hastened to see "*...this thing which had come to pass...*" which the Lord had made known to them, I feel I can imagine the thoughts that literally must have raced through their minds - "This must be the Messiah come to us at last" (Jeremiah 33:15), "He is to save us from our sins". "A son is to be born of a virgin!" (Isaiah 9:6). "The Lamb without blemish" (Exodus 12:5) typical of Jesus. Now, "*...all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God*" Isaiah 52:10. "*A light to lighten those dwelling in darkness*" Isaiah 9:2, and later quoted by Simeon in Luke 1:32, "*The KING OF ISRAEL*" Ezekiel 37:21 and John 1:49.

These thoughts could have flooded in upon them, and they surely would have repeated the words of Isaiah 26:8,9, "*O, Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy*

*name, and to the remembrance of thee...for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants will learn righteousness*".

At that time, the Jews, groaning under the rule of the Romans, looked for their Messiah to come as a conquering King, to free them and to set up His Kingdom, but, history records that they erred in their judgments of the prophecies. He came then, as a babe - in pure humility, simplicity and faithfulness. He came to reveal the Truth of God, and to live a life of obedience to His Father's will, as an example to mankind (1st Peter 2:21). The truth of God was needed, for the Jewish religion was largely affected by the traditions of men (Matthew 23:3) and the darkness of ignorance was upon the Gentiles, who were not called by His Name, "Christians" at that time (Isaiah 65:1; Acts 11:25).

Jesus said at His first coming, "*I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*" Matthew 9:13., that is, Jews and Christians alike (Acts 15:9; 3:23). There was to be a time for man to learn of God's ways, to repent of his own sins, and look to the Saviour's blood shed on the cross, to wash away his sins. Then, after




death (physical), at the time of the resurrection, which is yet to come, his soul shall rise from the grave and reunite with his spirit to form an intangible spiritual body (John 20:17) and live as the angels, as recorded in Luke 20:35,36.

The time of *“Peace, goodwill on earth”* was not to be heralded in at Jesus’ first coming, for He said, *“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I am not come to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance”*.

Jesus Christ knew that there was evil and sin in the world, and that this life is a testing ground, and it is for each one of us to use the free will given him to choose the good or the evil, and accordingly, as a man testifies of himself as to whom he chooses to serve, be it God or mammon (Romans 6:16), so too will be his place in the world to come, for every man has his proper gift of God (1st Corinthians 7:7).

Although the time of *“Peace on earth, goodwill towards men”* is not here

yet, outwardly, it is growing steadily in the hearts of the faithful (Luke 17:20,21) who are seeking the strength of God’s Spirit to enable them to follow the pattern of righteousness set by the Saviour, and thereby forsake all evil and sin. They know that one day, not too far distant, God’s appointed time will come. As the sun’s rays glisten on the wings of an aeroplane emerging from a cloud, so too will God’s Truth emerge from the clouds of unbelief, unrest, distrust and wrong in all its forms, and be manifested to the world.

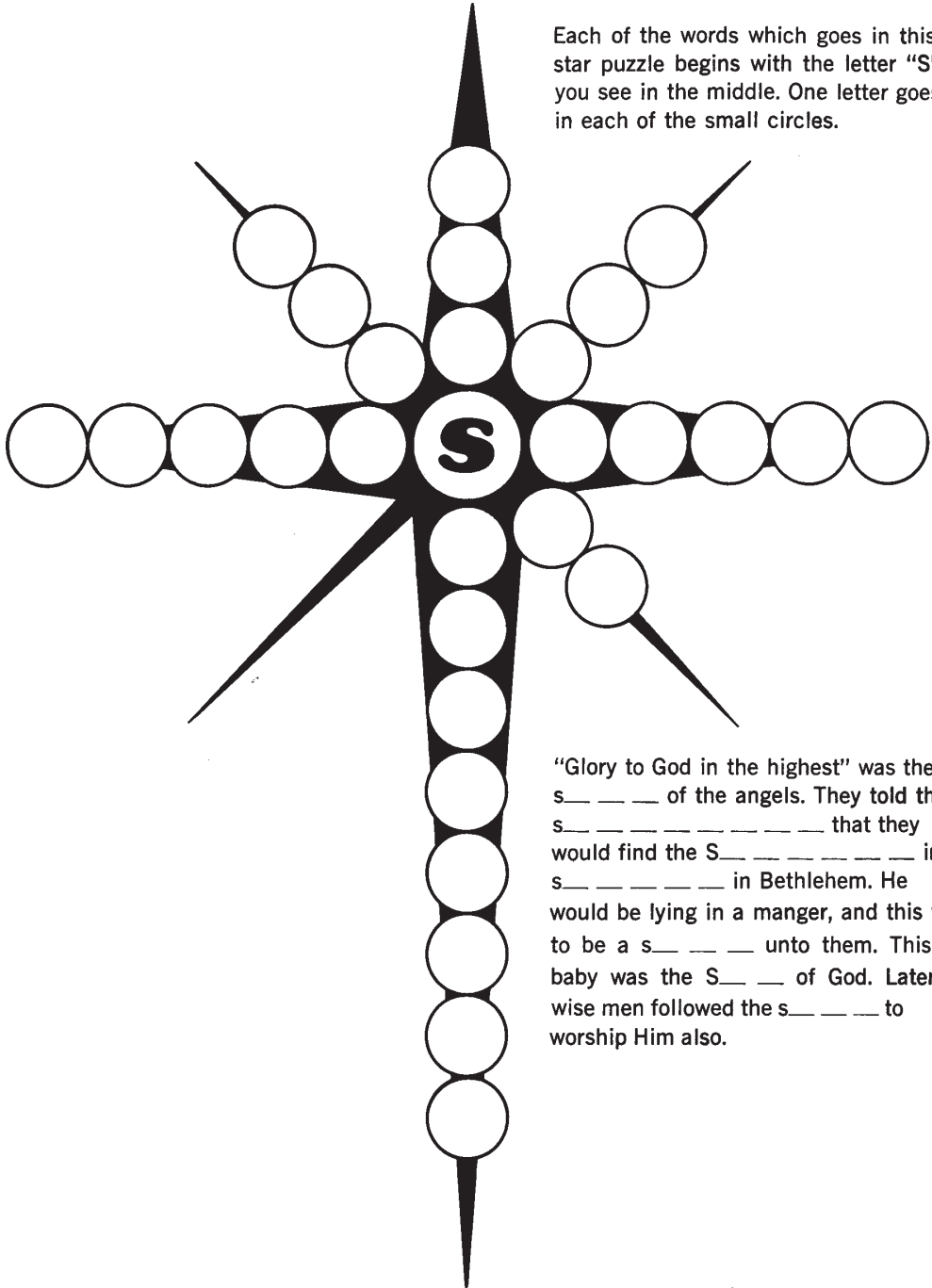
Then the RIGHTEOUS will be called forth, and we which are alive and remain (with spirit, soul and body cleansed and whole) shall be caught up with them (the risen dead) in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1st Thessalonians 4:17) and return to the earth to live and reign with Him. Then He will be the ONE KING over all the earth, with *“PEACE and GOOD WILL to MEN”* Zechariah 14:9. 



# Puzzle Page

## The Star

Each of the words which goes in this star puzzle begins with the letter "S" you see in the middle. One letter goes in each of the small circles.



"Glory to God in the highest" was the s\_\_\_\_\_ of the angels. They told the s\_\_\_\_\_ that they would find the S\_\_\_\_\_ in a s\_\_\_\_\_ in Bethlehem. He would be lying in a manger, and this was to be a s\_\_\_\_\_ unto them. This baby was the S\_\_\_\_\_ of God. Later, wise men followed the s\_\_\_\_\_ to worship Him also.

# Jesus is the Reason



You know that Christmas is Jesus' birthday, don't you? Birthdays are happy times. Long ago Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem to pay their taxes. The place was crowded - all rooms in the inn were taken, so they were given the shed where the animals sheltered, to rest in - that night, Jesus was born. Mary, His mother, wrapped Him up warmly and put Him in the manger - the box that holds the food for the cattle - to sleep - Jesus didn't have a cot like the babies that you know. Imagine how wonderful it must have been for the people when they heard Jesus was born, for they knew then, that the words God had spoken to the prophet many years before, were fulfilled. Jesus had come to teach, to heal and to save.


We all love to visit a new baby, don't we? Yes, we love to see their dear little faces and their tiny fingers and toes. Jesus had visitors too. Among those who came to see Him were wise men - they had seen a special star in the sky by which they knew that Jesus was born. The star moved and they followed it and it finally stopped over the stable where Jesus was. Now the wise men were rich men and they brought wonderful presents for Jesus and knelt before Him and worshipped Him.

Now too, there were shepherds minding their sheep in the night and an angel came to tell them that Jesus was born, and told them where to find

# for the Season

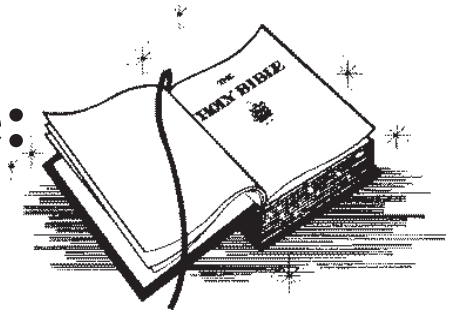
Him. Then suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of angels, singing praises to God. The shepherds hurried to find Jesus and when they had seen Him they returned home praising God for all the wonderful things they had heard and seen.

So there were rich, wise men and poor shepherd men among those who came to see the baby Jesus. In many ways we find God has let us know that it doesn't matter whether we are rich or poor - He loves us all. God sent Jesus for all to love and Jesus loves us all. It is now nearly two thousand years since all this happened and we find Christmas, Jesus' birthday, is still one of the most important days in the year.

Jesus returned to God for a time - He said He was going "...to prepare a place..." for us and He also said, "...I will come again...". We are living in a very important period - a time when Jesus' Second Coming may not be very far away. When Jesus comes again, He will not come as a baby - He will come as King. What a wonderful world it will be with Jesus, King. This is why we must work to be good, why we must go on trying to be better, for how wonderful it would be to be ready and waiting when Jesus comes. 



# Expand Your Bible: Here a Little - There a Little!



“That’s a revelation to me!”

How often have we said these words when some problem we’ve been thinking about, or some concept that has been taking shape in our mind, suddenly becomes clear! The picture is suddenly revealed and the moment of understanding is like a flash of light.

A revelation is described as knowledge disclosed to man by a divine or supernatural agency and so often is the culmination of the build up of ideas over a period of time. Is this how your ‘revelation’ of Jesus Christ happened, or was it a sudden insight?

It is interesting to follow some of the events which happened in the life of Peter the Apostle, and how they affected his understanding that Jesus was the Christ – revealing this mystery, little by little. Everybody knew Peter. He was a fisherman. He and Andrew, his brother, owned a fishing boat and were in partnership with James and John. Peter was quite well off – not rich, but comfortable. He was married, and lived in his own home at Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee.

No doubt, Peter, like many of the Jews of his time, talked of the Messiah to come; one who would come and save them from the tyranny of their Roman overlords. He imagined some ‘knight in

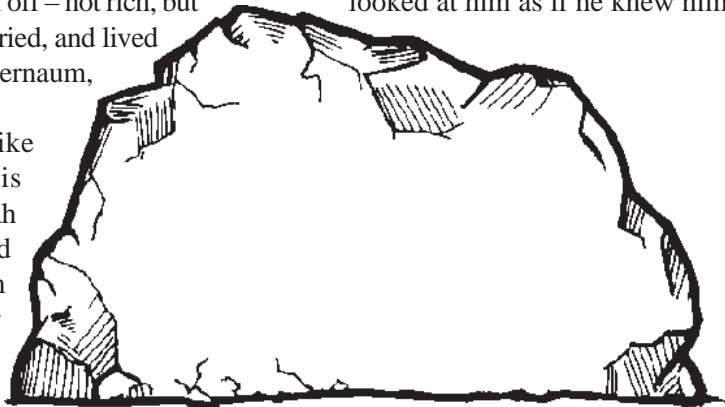
shining armour’ would come, gather a great army and overthrow their oppressors.

Peter was not a revolutionary but like everyone else was in no doubt that it would be good to see their land free of occupying soldiers and anti-Jewish rulers.

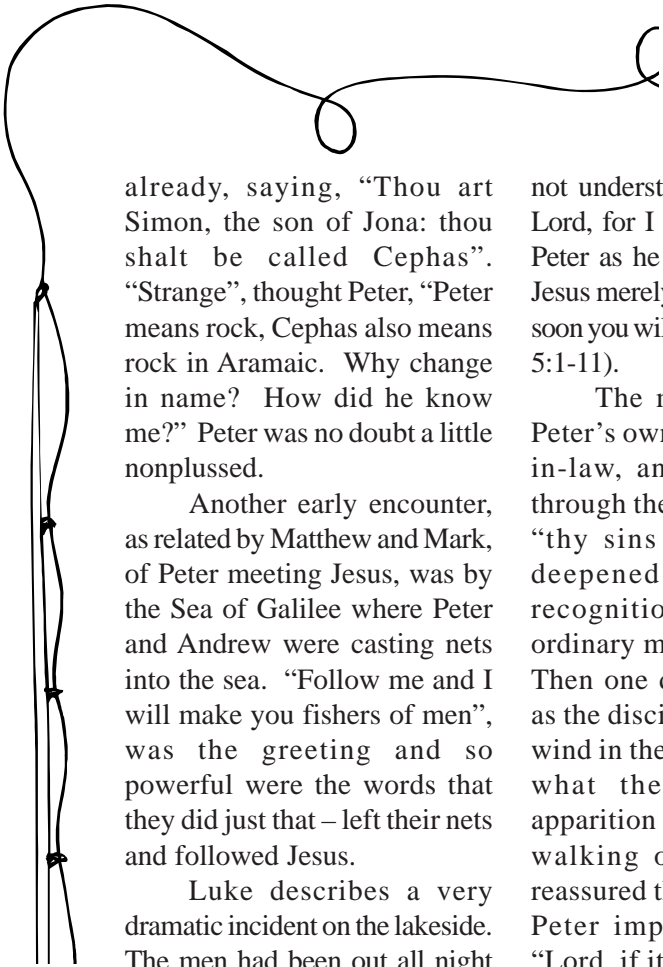
And so life would have continued except for certain events.

Peter and Andrew had travelled to the Jordan valley to hear John the Baptist preach and to listen to his different message. One day, as Andrew and a friend were listening, Jesus walked past. John said to his listeners “Behold the Lamb of God”. Curiosity made Andrew and his friend follow Jesus, to check out his words (John 1:35-42). Andrew was so impressed with what he heard that the first thing he did was to seek out Peter and tell him, “We have found the Messiah”, and bring his brother to Jesus.

Imagine Peter’s surprise when Jesus looked at him as if he knew him



**Peter & Cephas both mean ‘rock’**



already, saying, “Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas”. “Strange”, thought Peter, “Peter means rock, Cephas also means rock in Aramaic. Why change in name? How did he know me?” Peter was no doubt a little nonplussed.

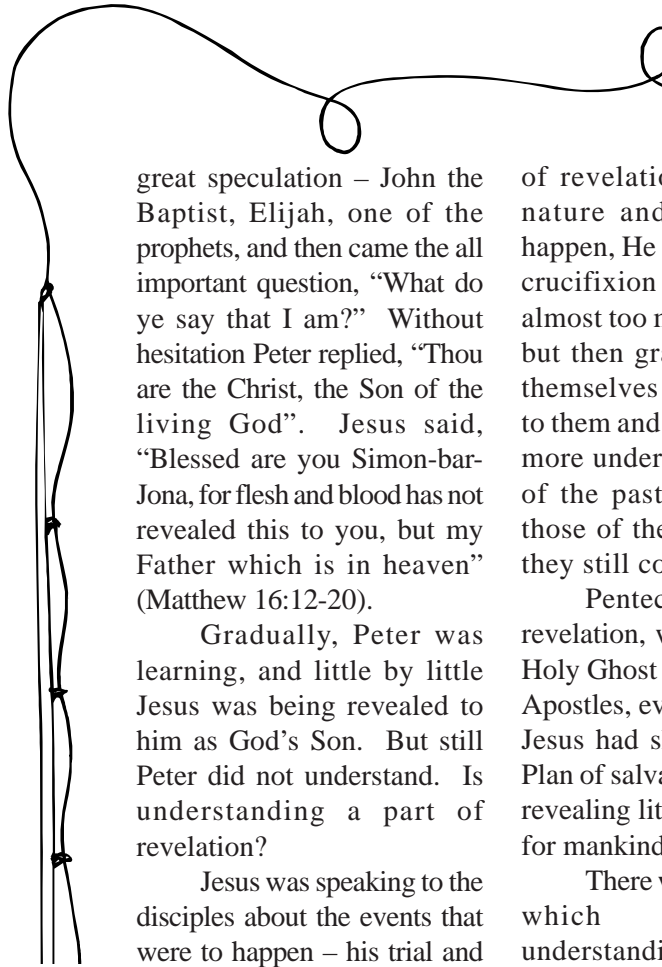
Another early encounter, as related by Matthew and Mark, of Peter meeting Jesus, was by the Sea of Galilee where Peter and Andrew were casting nets into the sea. “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men”, was the greeting and so powerful were the words that they did just that – left their nets and followed Jesus.

Luke describes a very dramatic incident on the lakeside. The men had been out all night fishing and caught nothing so now they were washing their nets in preparation for the next day. Jesus told Peter and his co-workers to go out again into the deep and let down their nets. Peter protested, “Master, we have fished all night and taken nothing, but at your word I will let down the nets”. Immediately the nets began pulling violently with the weight of a good catch. Peter realised instantly that this was no ordinary man he was with and that the catch wasn’t just good fortune. Peter felt he was in the presence of a power in Jesus that he could

not understand. “Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man”, cried Peter as he fell at Jesus’ feet. But Jesus merely said, “Do not be afraid, soon you will be catching men” (Luke 5:1-11).

The miraculous healing at Peter’s own house, of his mother-in-law, and the man let down through the roof whom Jesus told “thy sins are forgiven thee”, deepened further Peter’s recognition that Jesus was no ordinary man – but who was He? Then one dark and stormy night as the disciples rowed against the wind in the huge waves, they saw what they thought was an apparition coming towards them, walking on the water. Jesus reassured them, “It is I”, to which Peter impetuously called out, “Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water?” “Come,” said Jesus. While Peter looked up he was safe, but as soon as he looked at the wind and waves he started to sink. At Jesus’ commands the sea became quiet! Peter’s uncertain faith epitomized the struggle the disciples were having to come to grips with the mystery of who Jesus was and His different teachings (Matthew 14:22-33) – no force or retribution – just love.

The disciples were sent out to preach and spread the word and on their return Jesus asked them who people thought He was. There was



great speculation – John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets, and then came the all important question, “What do ye say that I am?” Without hesitation Peter replied, “Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God”. Jesus said, “Blessed are you Simon-bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 16:12-20).

Gradually, Peter was learning, and little by little Jesus was being revealed to him as God’s Son. But still Peter did not understand. Is understanding a part of revelation?

Jesus was speaking to the disciples about the events that were to happen – his trial and crucifixion. Peter rebuked Jesus for this saying it couldn’t happen – not to Jesus. Perhaps, thought Peter, if Jesus is God’s Son wouldn’t God stop these things happening? Much to Peter’s disgust Jesus told him, “Get thee behind me...” and then to his further shame, told Peter that he would deny Him thrice before the cock had crowed twice. In spite of his adamant attitude, Peter did deny his Lord three times and at the second cockcrow Peter realised his weakness and wept.


Was his denial a form

of revelation? Jesus knew his nature and knew what would happen, He knew the events of the crucifixion and resurrection were almost too much for the disciples, but then gradually events sorted themselves out. Jesus appeared to them and each time they gained more understanding. The events of the past dove-tailed in with those of the present – the future they still could not see!

Pentecost was the ultimate revelation, when the power of the Holy Ghost came and dwelt on the Apostles, eventually showing how Jesus had shown mankind God’s Plan of salvation and redemption – revealing little by little God’s love for mankind (Acts chapter 2).

There were many more events which shaped Peter’s understanding and revelation of who Jesus was and from history we know he became one of the greatest and staunchest of the Apostles, learning even late in life more of God’s Plan and love for mankind.

In our lives, as we go about our seemingly everyday routines, we don’t know where God may be leading us. “Here a little, and there a little” things will happen to trigger off special revelation in our minds as God shows himself to us through the things that happen.

*“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little and there a little”* Isaiah 28:10. 



# The Warning Left By Amos

*“Come to Bethel, and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God. And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The Lord, The God of hosts, is his name” Amos 4:4-13.*

Who was Amos? Well, we know he was not an educated person, but rather a man of the land, like a farmer. He is described as a shepherd and dresser of fig trees. He had an experiential relationship with God. Amos was from Tekoa, which is about 12 miles south of Jerusalem. He was a prophet sent by God to the northern kingdom of Israel, even though he was close to Jerusalem. He was of humble and secular origin, unlike other OT prophets, such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel who were brought up in an academic and priestly environment. Thus we could say that Amos is a ‘grass roots’ prophet, a true prophet of the people.

The prophet Amos is delivering a message from God to an Israel that has transgressed His commandments. He is

warning Israel of God’s impending judgment, but the people are ignoring him, the same as they did to the other Old Testament prophets, such as Hosea. The direness of their situation was not understood by the people of Israel, but Amos understood all too clearly the impending doom that was about to descend on Israel as a nation. Amos lived during the reign of Jeroboam II (793 – 753 BC) and it is worth noting at this point that it is only 30 years later (723 BC) that the Israelite capital of Samaria will be destroyed by the Assyrians and the Israelite people taken into exile. Israel, as a nation, from this stage, ceased to exist. Amos has a word of caution, as well as of hope, for this nation, which, with the advantage of hindsight, nations and peoples today would

be well advantaged to heed.

So what is the book of Amos about – well it is a call to Israel to seek God or continue to face His judgment. The passage above contains the essence of his message. Amos is giving God’s message to Israel in the hope that the listeners will see that God is at work in the events taking place in the world around them and that they will recognise the **causal** relationship between the declining social environment and their rejection of God’s instructions. Amos’s warnings and guidelines are as pertinent today as they were then if readers will only heed the message and the warning. Amos attempts to present God at mankind’s level, without at all demeaning the Lord, but by bringing God back to a level of understanding which the common man would understand, would seek, and thus find worth following. Thus Amos restresses some forgotten truths:

Firstly, that God is the creator and controller of all the earth. Amos’ experience as a shepherd would have given him a great respect for the outdoors and aspects of nature – as stated his understanding of God was at a natural level, rather than academic. By drawing the listener’s (and later the reader’s) awareness back to the everyday unexplained elements of nature, this would in some small way regain the reverential awe with which God should be received and accepted.

Secondly, Amos reminded the Israelite nation, that God has a special place for Israel – he makes reference to the historical election of Israel and the establishment of the Sinai Covenant with

Israel. This is to remind and reassure Israel that this affection is still held for them by the Lord, but they have abused his trust and have forgotten to follow His ways. As the guiding Father that He is, what is He supposed to do about their erring ways? Amos uses many mechanisms to awaken Israel to the direness of the warning, but unfortunately, Israel has become hardened and many of his words fall on deaf ears.

Thirdly, God has a conditional relationship with His people – by this he means that as in the Sinai Covenant, the relationship was conditional upon Israel’s obedience to earn God’s blessing. Amos lists in verses 4 to 11 five judgments which God has brought on Israel, as well as

comparing them to the harsh judgments placed upon Egypt by the Lord at the time of the Exodus, but still to no avail, for Israel’s response

has been to further reject God’s law and selfishly satisfy their own individual desires. Amos often uses historic events to emphasise his message.

Amos lists a number of specific events, ie, the famine, the lack of rain, the blast and mildew, the pestilence, natural disasters, in direct correlation with God’s judgment. Amos firmly believes that these natural disasters are a result of God’s wrath and anger with Israel’s sinful ways, but how to convince the people of this! To Amos the fact that nature had turned against them, as it did the Egyptians, and the fact that the Lord as judge was in control of this situation was something he saw as logical. Unfortunately the people did not see the logic he did.

Jeroboam II for part of his reign

**To live a ‘full’ life  
obey God’s Laws**

was one of the good kings of Israel, unlike his father Jeroboam I “*who caused all Israel to sin*”. Jeroboam II ruled Israel at a time when Israel enjoyed fairly controlled and peaceful relations with their neighbours. They had just passed through 2 reigns, the reign of Jehoash (798 – 782 BC) seeing them at war with Judah and the reign of Jehoahaz (814 – 798BC) seeing them under Syrian domination. Jeroboam II was a strong leader. He dominated a large area of land, defeated Syria, making this period in Israel’s history one of its quietest. This “quite time” unfortunately, gave Israel a false sense of confirmation that their religious activities were acceptable,

even though the physical afflictions described above had been inflicted upon them. Was the only way to accept that God

was angry with them to have an all out war, where many of Israel’s people were actually killed? What a stubborn and bruteheaded lot these early Israelites seem to be. Amos must have been pulling his hair out in despair at Israel’s blind and conceited arrogance.

Israel and Amos’ situation is one that is not alien today. Many people reject God’s guidelines on humanist lines, or for many other reasons, but we all tend to ignore God’s warnings. We blindly continue with our lives, seldom reflecting back on what we are doing, and why. Where is our focus? Is it on work? A hobby? A television show? The focus should be on God, and from there all enjoyment flows forth. Some of us will identify with Amos – seeing so clearly the

dangers, but having no one prepared to listen to the warning. But we are shown through Amos that the ‘little’ man can speak out and can have an influence – an influence which spans some 2700 years – still to have a meaning and perception unequalled today.

Penultimately the message is that fullness in life comes from obedience to God’s commands, for from obedience to God’s commands, comes God’s blessing which we all need but can only gain through obedience to His will. We may err occasionally, but it is recognising that we have erred that makes the difference, and making a decided decision to try not to repeat the error again. The basis of a

right relationship with God is dependent upon believers’ returning from their disobedient ways to being obedient to God’s

## We all ignore God’s warnings

Will and His commands. For the ultimate message is that of the atoning sacrifice of His Son, Jesus, to forgive the past and help us overcome the sins of this world to make us better followers of our Lord and Saviour.

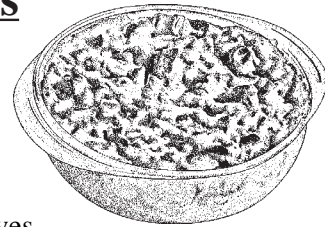
“*Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel (judgment for disobedience): and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel (temporally now and spiritually in the future)*” Amos 4:12. For those who are alive to meet their God when Jesus Christ returns, and in whom God has overcome sin, will ever be with their Lord in spirit and soul and body – the special gift of life to his people Israel if they will sacrifice their lives to him.

“*...and offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving*” Amos 4:5.📖

## Vegetarian Recipes

### **Egyptian Lentils & Rice**

Serves 6

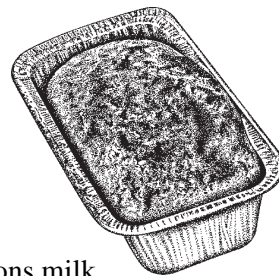


1½ cups (300g) basmati rice	2-3 bay leaves
1½ cups (300g) split mung lentils	2 pieces cassia bark
2 tablespoons olive oil	¼ teaspoon black peppercorns
1 sliced onion	5 cloves
1 teaspoon cumin seeds	1 tablespoon cardamom seeds

1. Wash mung lentils and rice, drain and place to the side.
2. Heat olive oil in fry pan, add onion, spices and bay leaves and cook for 5 minutes. Once the onion has softened add the rice and lentils and cook for around 2 minutes. Pour in 1.25 litres of water with salt to taste. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and cook over a low heat for 15 minutes, stirring gently to avoid breaking the grains. Cook, uncovered over low heat for 3 minutes or until the moisture has all evaporated. Serve hot with Indian curries and spicy sides. Can be served with sweet Chilli sauce.

### **Grandma's Ginger Cake**

225g (8oz) wholemeal flour	
½ teaspoon Bicarbonate of Soda	
1 egg	
100g (4oz) butter	
100g (4oz) dark brown sugar	2 tablespoons milk
4 tablespoons black treacle or molasses	2 teaspoons ground ginger



1. Mix together the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ginger.
2. Melt butter in a saucepan with sugar and treacle. Cool slightly, then beat in the milk and egg.
3. Stir the liquid ingredients into the flour. Beat well, then turn into a greased and lined loaf tin.
4. Bake in the oven at 180degC(350degF) for 40-45 minutes, until it rises and is firm to touch. Cool on a wire rack. Ice with lemon icing or use as a loaf.